

most of them at the hands of their ruler. Since this number has appeared in the papers for many months, the actual number must be much higher. The slaughter is unceasing. But the debate about American intervention is increasingly conducted in "realist" terms: the threat to American interests posed by jihadism in Syria, the intrigues of Iran and Hezbollah, the rattling of Israel, the ruination of Jordan and Lebanon and Iraq. Those are all good reasons for the president of the United States to act like the president of the United States. But wouldn't the prevention of ethnic cleansing and genocidal war be reason enough? Is the death of scores and even hundreds of thousands, and the displacement of millions, less significant for American policy, and less quickening? The moral dimension must be restored to our deliberations, the moral sting, or else Obama, for all his talk about conscience, will have presided over a terrible mutilation of American discourse: the severance of conscience from action.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank my colleagues. I yield.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2013

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 601, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 601) to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, for the interest of all Senators, I wanted to thank everyone for cooperating with us. We have handled a number of amendments, one quite controversial and nongermane, but we dealt with it. It is not on this bill, I am happy to say. We are trying to keep this bill a water infrastructure bill. There may be a few exceptions, but, for the most part, that is what we want because it will increase the chances of passage all the way through to get it to the President's desk.

The bill we are dealing with, the Water Resources Development Act, was last authorized in 2007. It is high time we did a follow-on bill. What we are talking about here is flood protection, projects we need all over the country to protect our people from the ravages of floods.

We need to make sure our ports are operational. I know my friend in the chair certainly deals with all these matters in his great and beautiful State of Hawaii. We need to make sure our ports are deep enough, they have enough funding to stay modernized, and can move that cargo in and out

with ease. We have environmental restoration. We have to take care of all of our water infrastructure.

I know Senator MERKLEY is here to say something about the bill, which I am very pleased about, so I am going to be very brief. I will talk for about 2 more minutes and say we have a great committee, the Environment and Public Works Committee, when it comes to infrastructure. We see eye to eye. We work together. Yes, we have our differences, but we can breach those differences.

This bill is a product of working together. It is a product of collaboration—not only in the committee where we work together, but even here when it got to the Senate. We have worked, Senator VITTER and I, with individual Members to meet all of their needs. There are no earmarks in this bill. Whatever we do is setting policy.

It is an exciting bill. It includes reforms I think are important. Most of all, I think the people at home are going to like it because it puts them in the driver's seat and protects them from delays and other problems as they move forward with projects their people need.

We have some terrific supporters of this legislation—I will close these early remarks—with organizations such as AFL-CIO, the Chamber of Commerce, the American Society of Civil Engineers, we have the Association of Equipment Manufacturers. We have many. I will show you the next chart and name a couple: The Transportation Construction Coalition, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, storm management agency, surveyors, engineers. I think what you see here is mainstream America is behind this bill.

The bad news is our infrastructure has been rated at a D-plus. You can't be the greatest Nation in the world and have an infrastructure that is rated D-plus.

While we have major problems on other fronts in our committee—and I have to admit today was not a good day for me, the committee, or the American people, when the Republicans boycotted the markup of Gina McCarthy to be the head of the Environmental Protection Agency after she answered more than 1,000 questions. She is the most qualified ever to be nominated, having served, how about this, four Republican Governors.

What more do they want? The fact is 70 percent of the American people want clean air, want clean water, want safety reform. Gina McCarthy deserves a vote, not a boycott. They say they don't like her answers. Well, I am not surprised. She is not Mitt Romney's nominee for the EPA, she is not Rick Perry's nominee for the EPA, she is Barack Obama's nominee for the EPA. It is her position, as it is the President's, that we should enforce the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and so on.

When your Republican Presidents put up nominees for the EPA I didn't agree

with, I didn't filibuster them. I said, okay, I will vote no; let them go. It is a sad day for me on the environment side of our committee.

On the public works side of my committee, it is a good day, because we are making progress. We have now about a half dozen amendments that have been cleared on both sides. We are trying to make them pending. We cleared them. We are asking all Senators, please get your amendments in because this can't go on forever. We need to pass this bill, as 550,000 jobs are supported by this legislation. Hundreds and hundreds of businesses are looking forward to our doing this. That is why we have this amazing array of support.

With that, I would say to Senator MERKLEY, the floor is his.

I yield the floor at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about one particular aspect of this bill, which is WIFIA. Before I explain what WIFIA is, I want to thank the Chair for managing this bill in a very bipartisan discussion of the committee. It has come to the floor with full committee examination, thorough debate, and amendment process. Here we are having a very thorough, visible, accountable process for considering this bill on the floor of the Senate. That is a very good example of the Senate working well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank the Senator.

Mr. MERKLEY. The heart of the WIFIA program is about jobs. It is about infrastructure. Five years after the greatest economic crisis in 80 years, we still face a serious jobs crisis. Too many are out of work and too many are unemployed. A good, living-wage job is the most important pillar of the American dream. There is no public program that can compare to the importance of a living-wage job for the stability and success of a family. We have to do more to create those jobs, a lot more. Wouldn't it be great if we could both create jobs and fill a desperate national need at the same time?

Well, that is exactly what WIFIA—which is short for Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act—does. Low-cost loans for water infrastructure projects create good jobs now while protecting our communities from devastating costs or public health crises in the future. WIFIA does all of this while making taxpayers money over time.

The need for water infrastructure is great. Across Oregon and across America, our infrastructure is aging. That aging infrastructure needs to be replaced. Our communities are growing. The demand for water infrastructure increases, whether it is water treatment on the front end or water treatment on the back end—sending water out to our homes and businesses and then treating it after it comes back. Much of our infrastructure is approaching the end of its lifespan and needs to be replaced.